

his son. The son soon died. Then the Bushmen brought back the stick lest all should die.<sup>1</sup> Until recently no building of incombustible materials could be built in any big town of the central province of Madagascar, on account of some ancient prejudice.<sup>2</sup> A party of Eskimos met with no game. One of them returned to their sledges and got the ham of a dog to eat. As he returned with the ham bone in his hand he met and killed a seal. Ever afterwards he carried a ham bone in his hand when hunting.<sup>3</sup> The Belenda women (peninsula of Malacca) stay as near to the house as possible during the period. Many keep the door closed. They know no reason for this custom. "It must be due to some now forgotten superstition."<sup>4</sup> Soon after the Yakuts saw a camel for the first time smallpox broke out amongst them. They thought the camel to be the agent of the disease?| A woman amongst the same people contracted an endogamous marriage. She soon afterwards became blind. This was thought to be on account of the violation of ancient customs.<sup>6</sup> A very great number of such cases could be collected. In fact they represent the current mode of reasoning of nature people. It is their custom to reason that, if one thing follows another, it is due to it. A great number of customs are traceable to the notion of the evil eye, many more to ritual notions of uncleanness. No scientific investigation could discover the origin of the folkways mentioned, if the origin had not chanced to become known to civilized men. We must believe that the known cases illustrate the irrational and incongruous origin of many folkways. In civilized history also we know that customs have owed their origin to "

historical accident/'— the vanity of a princess, the deformity of a king, the whim of a democracy, the love intrigue of a statesman or prelate. By the institutions of another age it may be provided that no one of these things can affect decisions, acts, or interests, but then the power to decide the ways may have passed to clubs,

<sup>1</sup> Lichtenstein, *South Africa*, II, 61. <sup>4</sup> *Ztsft.f. Eth.*, XXVIII, 170.

<sup>2</sup> Sibree, *Great African Island*, 301. <sup>5</sup> Wilken, *Volkenkunde* 546.

<sup>8</sup> *Bur. Eth.*, XVIII (Part I), 325. <sup>6</sup> Sieroshevski, *Yafoiiy*, 558.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter XIV.